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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for early childhood educators, student teachers, practicing teachers, and parents who are interested in improving observation and assessment processes for children from infancy through the elementary school years. The book covers the history, philosophy, and practice of observing, recording, and analyzing children's behavior. Focusing on the individual child, the text explains the need to gather information about each child and suggests a variety of techniques for recording the data, emphasizing the observer's own skill development. Chapter 1, "Observation: An Introduction," explores why, what, when, and how to observe, and provides an overview of the principles behind the use of observation and portfolio assessment as developmentally appropriate evaluation. Chapter 2, "Observing Development," focuses on child development and how it can be observed, outlining the developmental domains and various theories of development. Chapter 3, "Narratives," Chapter 4, "Samplings," Chapter 5, "Checklists," Chapter 6, "Charts, Scales, and Pictorial Representations," and Chapter 7, "Media Techniques," each explore a different style of recording, defining the methodology, indicating features of the particular method, and demonstrating how it can be used. Chapter 8, "Portfolios and Child Studies," pulls together elements from each of the methods previously explained and shows how collections of various observational records and other information can provide the most detailed and effective technique for profiling the individual child. Chapter 9, "Measuring Outcomes," discusses the philosophy and use of outcome-based education. Chapter 10, "Screening and Assessment," gives an overview of the uses and limitations of standardized screening and assessment tools. Chapter 11, "Environmental Observation and Evaluation," shifts away from evaluating the child's behavior to evaluating the child's environment. (Includes a glossary of key terms and approximately 125 references.) (EV)